

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 LIMA 00937 011801Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 HA-05 BIB-01 /067 W
-----118317 020737Z /23

R 011710Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY LIMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8515
INFO USIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIMA 0937

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM, PE
SUBJECT: POPULAR POLITICAL TV PROGRAM "DIRECT CONTACT"
ABRUPTLY TERMINATED

1. THE WIDELY-VIEWED PRIME-TIME TV PROGRAM, "DIRECT CONTACT", PRODUCED BY YOUNG PERUVIAN JOURNALISTS ALFREDO BARNECHEA AND PETER CANNOCK, HAS BEEN CANCELLED BY THE GOP-CONTROLLED CHANNEL 4 ADTER 13 PROGRAMS AS "UNPROFITABLE." BEGUN ON OCT 9, THE SUNDAY DISCUSSION AND INTERVIEW PROGRAM FEATURED WIDELY-VIEWED DEBATES BETWEEN APRA'S TOWNSEND AND TTE PCP'S DEL PRADO, BETWEEN CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT (PDC) CORNEJO CHAVEZ AND FORMER LIMA MAYOR BEDOYA REYES (POPULAR CHRISTIAN PARTY), AS WELL AS INTERVIEWS OF FORMER PRESIDENT BELAUNDE, U.S. SENATOR GEORGE MCGOVERN, AND THE AMBASSADOR.

2. DIRECT CONTACT, WITH ITS FRANK DEBATE AND TREATMENT OF CONTROVERSIAL THEMES, HAD COME TO REPRESENT THE PROMISE OF A NEW DEGREE OF POLITICAL OPENNESS IN PERU. IT WAS THE FIRST PROGRAM OF ITS TYPE TO BE SEEN IN ALMOST A DECADE AND WAS REPORTED TO HAVE ATTRACTED AN AUDIENCE OF ABOUT 1.5 MILLION IN THE LIMA-CALLAO AREA. THE PROGRAM WAS NOT PRECENSORED, AND IN SOME CASES WAS BROADCAST LIVE. BOTH BARNECHEA AND CANNOCK ARE ASSOCIATED WITH ENRIQUE ZILERI'S WIDELY-READ BEWEEKLY NEWS MAGAZINE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 LIMA 00937 011801Z

"CARETAS" AND CANNOCK IS AN ACTIVE SUPPORTER OF EX-PRESIDENT BELAUN
DE'S ACCION POPULAR PARTY.

3. THE NEXT TO LAST PROGRAM (JAN 7) INCLUDED A SCATHING ATTACK ON THE GOP ECONOMIC POLICIES BY FORMER CENTRAL BANK OFFICIAL MANUEL MOREYRA LOREDO. THE LAST PROGRAM TO BE AIRED WAS

SCHEDULED TO APPEAR ON SUNDAY, JAN 15. IT FEATURED A PRERECORDED INTERVIEW WITH JAVIER DIEZ CANSECO, SPOKESMAN FOR THE NEWLY-FORMED EXTREME LEFT WING COALITION POPULAR DEMOCRATIC UNITY (UDP), WHO CRITICIZED INTERIOR MINISTER CISNEROS PERSONALLY FOR STRIKE-RELATED VIOLENCE IN CHIMBOTE. THE INTERIOR MINISTRY APPARENTLY HEARD OF DIEZ CANSECO'S APPEARANCE AND CONFISCATED THE VIDEOTAPE SHORTLY BEFORE THE PROGRAM WAS TO BE AIRED. BOTH DIEZ CANSECO AND BARNECHEA PUBLICLY PROTESTED THE GOP ACTION, AND THE PROGRAM WAS SHOWN WITHOUT ADVANCE PUBLICITY ON JAN 17.

4. SHORTLY AFTER THE BELATED APPEARANCE OF THE 13TH PROGRAM, THE GOP-CONTROLLED PRESS ANNOUNCED THAT BARNECHEA'S CONTRACT WITH THE STATE-CONTROLLED CHANNEL 4 HAD BEEN CANCELLED BECAUSE THE PROGRAM WAS "UNPROFITABLE." IN AN INTERVIEW IN THE JAN 30 "CARETAS," BARNECHEA AND CANNOCK REFUTE THE GOP'S ALLEGATION THAT THE PROGRAM WAS UNPROFITABLE, CITING THE HIGH VIEWER FIGURES ESTABLISHED BY INDEPENDENT RATING AGENCIES. ACCORDING TO THE "CARETAS" ARTICLE, INCOME FROM ADVERTISING DURING THE FIRST 8 PROGRAMS ALONE WAS PROBABLY AT LEAST 4.3 MILLION SOLES (US 34,600) WHILE THE PRODUCERS RECEIVED ONLY S/550,000 IN FEES.

5. COMMENT: THE CANCELLATION OF DIRECT CONTACT OFFERS A REMINDER THAT FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION REMAINS RELATIVE IN PERU, WHERE THE DAILY PRESS, TV AND RADIO ARE CONTROLLED BY THE GOP'S OFICINA CENTRAL DE INFORMACIONES (OCI). THE GOP OBVIOUSLY REMAINS SENSITIVE TO CRITICISM OF ITS POLICIES AND FEARS THAT

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 LIMA 00937 011801Z

SOCIAL UNREST MIGHT BE ENCOURAGED ESPECIALLY BY OPEN TV DEBATE. IT IS APPARENTLY WILLING TO PAY THE PRICE OF PUBLIC CYNICISM ABOUT THE GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT TO FREE POLITICAL DEBATE TO ENSURE THAT SUCH CRITICISM REMAINS WITHIN BOUNDS.

SHLAUDEMAN

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CENSORSHIP, TELEVISION BROADCASTING, INFORMATION CONTROL
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 01 feb 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978LIMA00937
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780049-0901
Format: TEL
From: LIMA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t197802107/aaaadmne.tel
Line Count: 99
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 636f08ce-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 jul 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3444692
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: POPULAR POLITICAL TV PROGRAM \"DIRECT CONTACT\" ABRUPTLY TERMINATED
TAGS: SHUM, SOPN, PE
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/636f08ce-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014